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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims and add new claims 17 and 18 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for producing a blank for a component of laser active quartz glass, said method comprising ~~the following steps~~:
  - a) providing a dispersion with a solids content of at least 40% by wt. which contains SiO<sub>2</sub> nanopowder and dopants, including a cation of one or more ~~the~~ rare earth metals or ~~of the~~ transition metals in a liquid,
  - b) granulation by moving the dispersion with withdrawal of moisture until ~~the formation of~~ a doped SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate of spherical porous granulate grains having a moisture content of less than 35% by wt. and a density of at least 0.95 g/cm<sup>3</sup> is formed,
  - c) drying and purifying the SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate by heating said SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate to a temperature of at least 1000°C so as to form ~~with formation of~~ doped porous SiO<sub>2</sub> granules having an OH content of less than 10 ppm, and
  - d) sintering or melting the doped SiO<sub>2</sub> granules in a reducing atmosphere so as to form ~~with formation of~~ the blank of doped quartz glass, including a gas pressure sintering, which comprises the following steps:
    - aa) heating the SiO<sub>2</sub> granules to a melting temperature of at least 1600°C while applying and maintaining a negative pressure;
    - bb) holding the SiO<sub>2</sub> granules at the melting temperature at an overpressure ranging from 5 bar to 15 bar for a melting period of at least 30 min so as

~~to form with formation of~~ the quartz glass blank;

cc) cooling the quartz glass blank while maintaining said ~~an~~ overpressure.

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ an initial solids content of at least 50% by wt. is set in the dispersion.
3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate obtained according to step b) has a BET surface area ranging from 40 m<sup>2</sup>/g to 70 m<sup>2</sup>/g.
4. (currently amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate obtained according to step b) has a BET surface area of at least 50 m<sup>2</sup>/g.
5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the spherical porous granulate grains have a grain size of less than 500 µm.
6. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate is dried and purified in ~~under~~ a chlorine-containing atmosphere.
7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> granulate is dried and purified at a temperature of at least 1050°C.
8. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the drying and purifying of the porous granulate is performed in ~~under~~ an oxygen-containing atmosphere.
9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the porous SiO<sub>2</sub> granules obtained according to step c) have an OH content of less than

one wt ppm.

10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein characterized in that~~ the porous SiO<sub>2</sub> granules obtained according to step c) have a BET surface area of less than 20 m<sup>2</sup>/g.
11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> granules are thermally densified prior to step d).
12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein characterized in that~~ the quartz glass blank is annealed at a temperature of at least 1120°C for a retention period of at least 40 hours h.
13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> granules according to step d) are molten in a mold.
14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein characterized in that~~ the SiO<sub>2</sub> blank according to step d) is three-dimensionally homogenized.
15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein characterized in that a~~ bulk body with a radially inhomogeneous refractive index distribution is formed from SiO<sub>2</sub> granules of different refractive index, and ~~that~~ the bulk body is sintered or molten to obtain the SiO<sub>2</sub> blank.
16. (currently amended) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising:  
providing Use of an SiO<sub>2</sub> blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1,  
and incorporating said SiO<sub>2</sub> blank into as a core material for a fiber laser, as an  
optical filter or as a cladding tube for laser and transmitting said laser light

through said fiber.

17. (new) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing an  $\text{SiO}_2$  blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, and incorporating said  $\text{SiO}_2$  blank into an optical filter; and transmitting said laser light through said optical filter.
18. (new) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing an  $\text{SiO}_2$  blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, and incorporating said  $\text{SiO}_2$  blank into a cladding tube for a fiber; and transmitting said laser light through said fiber.